

AMERICANS ARE STUBBORNLY UNMOVED BY DEATH

(By Robin Givhan)

The scene looked heartbreakingly familiar: the rumble of tactical vehicles, the swarm of law enforcement officers, the long ribbons of yellow police tape and the eyewitness descriptions thick with residual terror. Monday evening's deadly shooting in Boulder, Colo., which resulted in the deaths of 10 people, including a police officer, was the second mass shooting in a week.

A dreadful normalcy has returned. Muscle memory demands that we lament it—even as all evidence suggests that many of us are unmoved by death. It doesn't cause behavior to change. It doesn't shake people from their moorings at the center of their own universe. Death is not a deterrent.

In the days after a mass shooting, the nation mourns and those who died are named. The hearts of our elected officials have been broken so many times that surely they must be in shards by now. The flags are lowered to half-staff. And the president speaks. Joe Biden, a man who is expert at consoling, did the best that he could to say something true that did not sound like a cliché.

"I even hate to say it because we're saying it so often: My heart goes out. Our hearts go out for the survivors, the—who had to—had to flee for their lives and who hid, terrified, unsure if they would ever see their families again, their friends again," Biden said Tuesday afternoon from the State Dining Room. "The consequences of all this are deeper than I suspect we know. By that, I mean the mental consequences—a feeling of—anyway, it just—we've been through too many of these."

The images from these shootings can be gut-wrenching. In video and still images, people see shellshocked survivors pouring out of the school, the night club and, this time, the grocery store. There's blood in these images, sometimes even the blurred image of one of the deceased. There's nothing sanitized about them. The shooting may happen behind closed doors, but the death is in the open. The terror rises off the survivors like a stench; the sound of fear reverberates.

And still the deaths don't spur action to make the guns harder to get, to make the guns less efficient. The president, some politicians and many activists cry out for "common sense" gun laws to stop the senseless death even as it seems that they are pleading with a country that's engaged in a completely different kind of calculation.

Increasingly it seems that we simply do not care about the other person, that other family, someone else's child. The self is everything. It's freedom and liberty, whims and desires. Community doesn't extend beyond one's front door. Everything else is someone else's concern.

Studies have shown that the human brain can lose the capacity to process death, to absorb the meaning of it, when the numbers of the dead begin to reach staggering levels. We have been told that the heart can go numb in response to such enormity. This is one of the explanations for why people have continued to engage in risky behavior during the coronavirus pandemic even as it has become ever clearer how best to protect our fellow Americans. The end is on the horizon, and if people simply wear a mask, social distance and persevere with patience, we might get there—not all of us, sadly, but most of us.

Yet unmasked revelers crowded onto the streets of Miami Beach. The very real possibility of death has not been a deterrent. The community didn't matter as these partyers and tourists ostensibly shot a different kind of deadly slug into the Florida air.

More than 544,000 deaths in the United States due to the coronavirus have not sent

everyone scurrying to protect their neighbor. To follow common sense recommendations. To center the community instead of the individual.

If that number is too big for people to grapple with, what is the right number? What number is small enough that each death touches the heart and therefore motivates people to act, to be better? Is it 58—the number of people a man killed at a Las Vegas country music festival in 2017? Is it 49—the number killed in a shooting at Orlando's Pulse nightclub in 2016? Or perhaps the motivating number is nine, which accounts for those who were fatally shot in Charleston during a prayer meeting. Is it eight—the number who were killed in Georgia just last week? It surely can't be one because there are singular deadly shootings in communities all too often and still nothing happens. Nothing.

We have not gone numb to death. To "go numb" suggests that once there was feeling, once there was sensitivity. When was that? Perhaps it was back in 1968 when, after the deaths of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, Congress passed gun laws that formed the basis of federal regulation that has been regularly eroded and only occasionally strengthened. We haven't cared for a long time. Not when the dying were schoolchildren, people in the midst of prayer or contented folks just living quiet lives.

HARRIS'S SELF-EVIDENT TRUTH

Crowds gather in the street while a speaker blasts music an hour past curfew in Miami Beach on Sunday. (Daniel A. Varela/Miami Herald/AP)

Today, some in this country argue against gun laws with a ferocity that moves beyond a right to hunt rabbits, or defend oneself against an assailant or one's property in the face of an intruder. We refuse to relinquish the delusion that 21st-century America is a frontier town in which gunplay is a form of justice.

Many insist that the very real possibility of mass deaths does not outweigh a personal inconvenience or the setting aside of a myth. Give up large-capacity magazines. Wear a mask. These deaths matter.

We are not numb to death. We stubbornly, selfishly dismiss it. We shake it off. But there is always an assault that has the capacity to bring an individual low. Some bracing gut punch that stings and startles. The pain might finally register in a way that is deep and lasting. And that person begins to feel something. But that may require death coming directly to their own doorstep, since that's the only one that, for many of us, seems to matter.

Correction: A previous version of this article misstated the year of the shooting at a Las Vegas country music festival. It was in 2017, not 2018.

HONORING ELIZABETH ANN HOFFMAN

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Elizabeth Ann Hoffman, whom I have named the 2021 Woman of the Year in Contra Costa County, California. Woman of the Year recognizes women who have made important contributions to California's 5th Congressional District in Arts and Culture, Professional Achievement,

Entrepreneurship and Innovation or Community Service.

A California native born in San Leandro and raised in Benicia, Ms. Hoffman attended Sonoma State University for her undergraduate degree and San Jose State University for her graduate education in Social Services. A member of Food Bank of Contra Costa and the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Hoffman has been an active member of our community for many years.

Most notably, Ms. Hoffman serves as the Executive Director for Rebuilding Together Solano County (RTSC), working diligently to improve the lives of low-income families, veterans, seniors, and disabled members of our community. Throughout the years, Ms. Hoffman's contributions to RTSC have resulted in the rehabilitation of over 40 low-income homes and 52 community centers. She has also impressively amassed over 12,000 volunteers for the organization, expanding resources to better the lives of those in need.

Her exceptional commitment to our community has not gone unrecognized. Ms. Hoffman has received numerous public health service awards, including PG&E's Environmental Remediation Sibley Award and the American Red Cross' Community Service Hero Award.

Madam Speaker, Ms. Hoffman has proven herself to be a true asset to the groups she serves. Our community is immeasurably better for all of Ms. Hoffman's contributions and it is therefore fitting and proper that we honor her here today as Contra Costa County's 2021 Woman of the Year.

KENT MCELHATTAN

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Kent McElhattan, a constituent who has dedicated his life and career to safety.

Earlier this month, the National Safety Council (NSC) honored Mr. McElhattan with the prestigious Flame of Life award at the 2020NE Virtual Safety Congress and Expo. This honor has only been given four times in the 107-year history of the National Safety Council, as it is reserved for the most outstanding individuals who have dedicated themselves to building safer workplaces and communities. Mr. McElhattan is a long-time partner to the National Safety Council. He served on the NSC Board of Directors for a decade, including a stint as chairman from 2010 until 2013.

A founder of the Pittsburgh-based Industrial Scientific, Kent worked to build products that protect workers from hazardous conditions around the world. Industrial Scientific specializes in producing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), some of which has become vital to all of us during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under his leadership, Industrial Scientific was a founding member of the Campbell Institute, which is focused on solving global environmental, health, and safety challenges through research and innovation.

Now CEO and co-founder of another Pittsburgh-based company, Discovery Robotics, Mr. McElhattan continues to strive for worker

safety and quality of life through the creation of robotic solutions.

Feeling personally responsible for every worker he employed over the course of his career, he has made it his top priority to ensure that every one of his workers returned home safely to their families at the end of each workday. He and his family also founded the McElhattan Foundation, which is invested in the belief that safety advancements can be achieved through technology. The McElhattan foundation has also partnered with NSC to launch the Work to Zero initiative, designed to eliminate workplace fatalities through the use of technology.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's 18th Congressional District, I want to commend Kent and thank him for his many years of dedication to building a safer community and a safer workplace for his employees. His actions serve as an inspiration and should be admired by us all. I am pleased to honor him as a deserving recipient of the National Safety Council Flame and Life award.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mr. NUNES. Madam Speaker, I was unable to vote on Roll Call Numbers 95, 96, and 97. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 95; NAY on Roll Call No. 96; and YEA on Roll Call No. 97.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. RAGHAVENDRA TIRUPATHI

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Raghavendra Tirupathi on receiving the Outstanding COVID Resource Award from the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Tirupathi is an Infectious Disease Physician and Medical Director at Keystone Health. His institutional knowledge on infectious diseases has been an invaluable resource to the hospital. While offering sound medical advice on patient's treatment plans, he has also worked to make improvements to the health system amid the pandemic. His attention to detail and medical advice will continue to be a great asset to the Chambersburg community.

Dr. Tirupathi exhibits true dedication, compassion, and professionalism to the patients at Keystone Health. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th District, I congratulate Dr. Tirupathi on this achievement and thank him for his service to our community.

JULIE DELUNA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Julie DeLuna

for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Julie DeLuna is a student at Jefferson Jr./Sr. H.S. and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Julie DeLuna is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Julie DeLuna for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING PHILIP CAVINESS

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Philip Caviness of Rush County, Indiana.

Philip served as the Republican County Chairman of Rush County. He committed his time, talents and energy to the Sixth Congressional District and the rest of the Hoosier state. I am grateful for his service.

A dedicated public servant, Phil currently serves Rush County as county prosecutor. Philip is actively engaged in civic and community endeavors, often the first to volunteer his time and always willing to help at a moment's notice.

Finally, I have gotten to know Philip over the last four years, and I am grateful for his friendship.

I thank Philip Caviness.

HONORING ELOISE SCOTT

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Eloise Scott, whom I have named the 2021 Woman of the Year in Solano County, California. Woman of the Year recognizes women who have made important contributions to California's 5th Congressional District in Arts and Culture, Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurship and Innovation or Community Service.

Born in the Philippines in 1935, Ms. Scott immigrated to the United States in 1959, where she lived in San Francisco until settling in Vallejo in 1976. She graduated from the University of San Francisco with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Counseling and Social Work. She has utilized her expertise in counseling to aid families and respond to numerous community tragedies. In 1998, she brought community awareness of the shooting of 14-year-old Filipino student Regi Infanti, organizing respite care and counseling, and has continued to expand her meaningful work since.

Ms. Scott has become a notably fierce advocate for change among the Filipino commu-

nity in Vallejo. Serving as a board member for both the Filipino Community of Solano County Inc. and Filipino American Social Services, Ms. Scott has been instrumental in the progress made for the Filipino American community and positively impacted the lives of young women, from substance abuse treatment to pregnancy prevention. She also serves as the Chairperson of the Philippine Cultural Committee "PISTA SA NAYON" and has been the President of Hinunangan Association, Inc., and a member of Solano County's Democratic Central Committee.

Driven by her faith, Ms. Scott is also a proud member of St. Basil's Catholic Church in Vallejo, where she serves as a Eucharistic Minister. She has volunteered her time to fundraising for the building maintenance and other various activities and programs within the church, as well as helping with physical education classes for St. Basil's secondary school.

Our community in Vallejo has been improved from Eloise Scott's contributions and it is therefore fitting and proper that we honor her here today as Solano County's 2021 Woman of the Year.

IN RECOGNITION OF EDWARD GAZEL'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 26, 2021

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Edward Gazel of Lincoln Park on the occasion of his 100th birthday. His contributions to our community and to our nation are worthy of commendation.

Mr. Gazel was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan and is a 1939 graduate of Detroit Northwestern High School. During the Great Depression he earned money working at the Detroit Golf Club, caddying for Michigan sports legends like Coach Harry Kipke and Detroit Tiger Mickey Cochrane. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he volunteered for the Marine Corps.

He was sent to San Diego, California for boot camp and was then assigned to a medium tank unit of the Second Tank battalion, Second Marine Division. The stories of his service are numerous and detailed and cannot only be shared in one short speech. His unit saw action at Tarawa, Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa. After the Japanese surrendered, his unit was assigned to maintain order at the scene of the second atomic bombing in Nagasaki. He often remembers his fellow Marines who lost their lives in combat and is the last surviving member of his unit. Mr. Gazel was awarded the Bronze Star for his gallantry at Tinian.

After his return to the United States in December 1945 and his discharge from the armed forces in January 1946 he returned to civilian life, marrying Esther the same year. Together they had three girls and Mr. Gazel found his success in selling wholesale produce in Detroit. A true patriot and a decorated Marine, he is known to insist that "the real heroes are those who fell in combat and rest under those markers on far away and sometimes forgotten battlefields."

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Edward Gazel on his 100th